

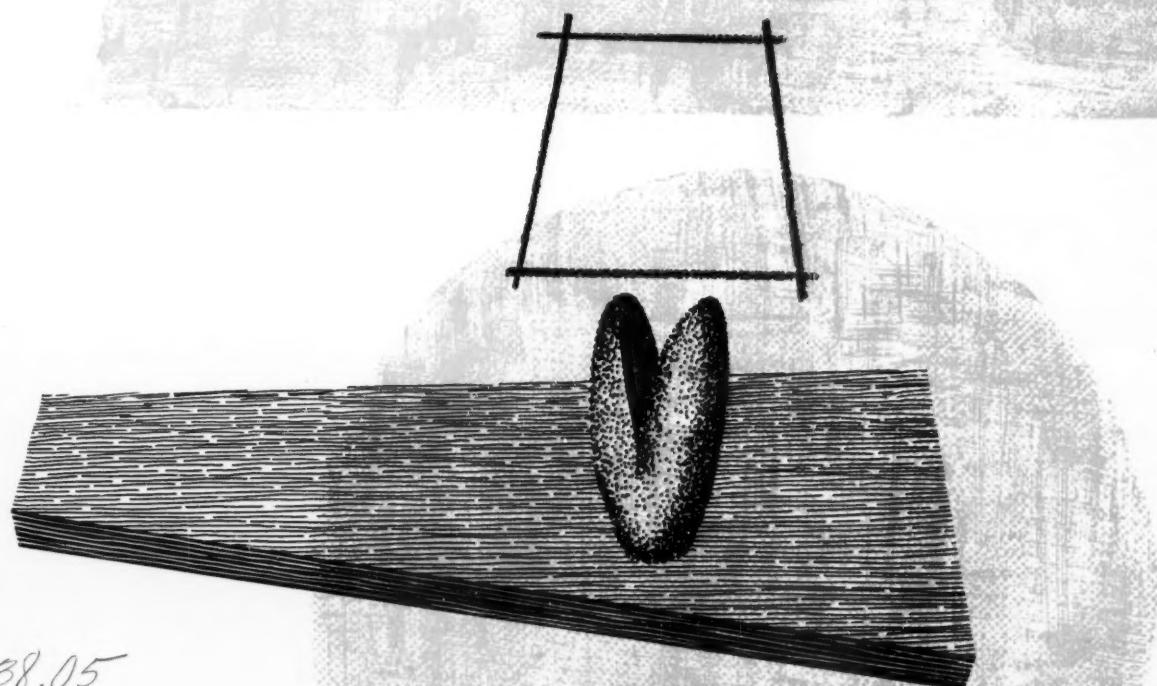
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Ceramics

MONTHLY

MARCH 1955

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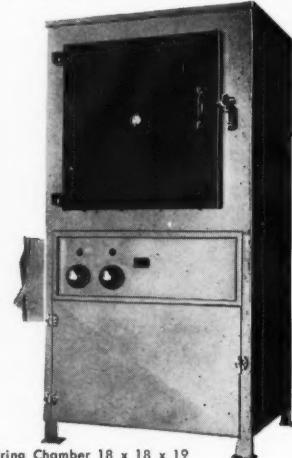


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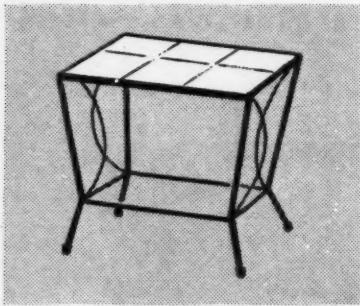
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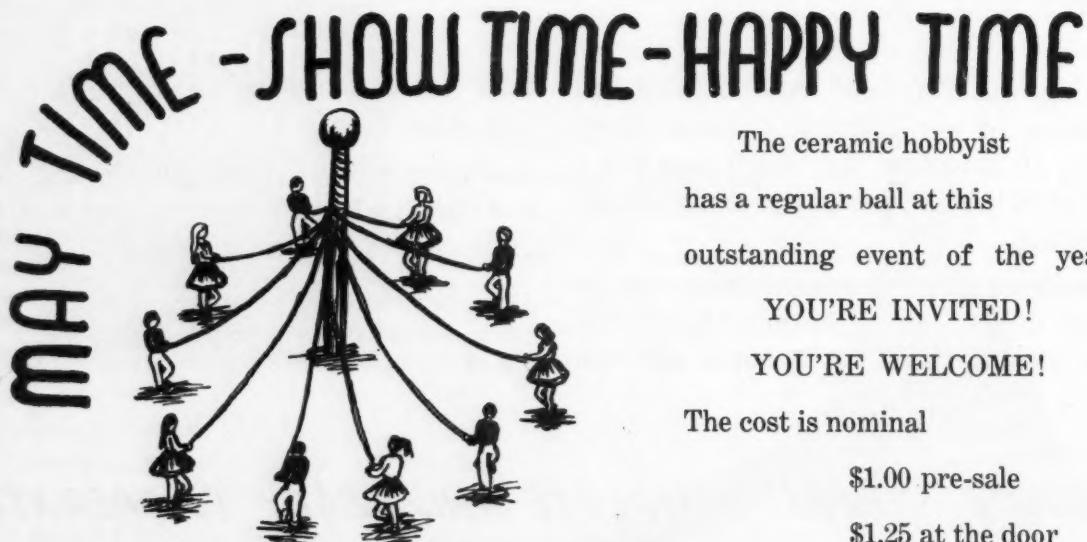
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Ceramics MONTHLY

Volume 3, Number 3

MARCH • 1955

50 cents per copy

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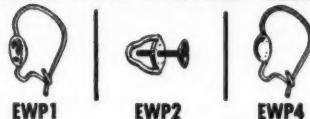
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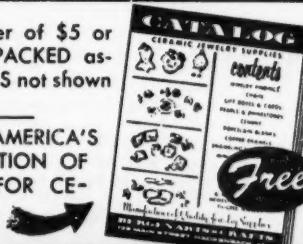
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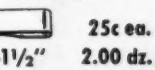
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HOUSE OF GLAZES
The Usual and Unusual

letters

SOUND OFF

Gentlemen:

... Every once in a while I get to thinking about color in ceramics—rich, even brilliant color. Now don't get me wrong. I like the earth tones, the neutral tones that so many contemporary craftsmen use, but I wonder whether monotonous can't get to be monotonous?

The great Ming period of Chinese pottery produced brilliantly glazed pieces. Contemporary decorating taste calls for color, used with discretion, for emphasis. Well, why does that color for emphasis have to be the sofa pillow or the drapery or the one bold red chair? Why can't it be a ceramic piece? Is there something inherent in clay that makes rich coloring of it a vulgarization? I know that the neutral, natural colors have their important place. I would hate to see our homes ablaze with brilliant glazes. But can't we have a bright or bold-colored piece occasionally?

The current preference for understated color may well be part of the reaction to the overdecorated, ornate, Victorian front-parlor days. But haven't we carried it far enough? Can't we now take a few fliers into color?

BARBARA CURTIN

Jackson Heights, N. Y.

◆ In our very first issue (January 1953), Daniel Rhodes of Alfred University wrote, in his article on contemporary pottery, that "earthenware or faience which is heavily glazed and in which the interest centers on the color of the glaze or on the decoration rather than on the form and character of the clay does not quite satisfy the need potters feel for expressive use of clay itself." In the July 1954 issue, Carlton Atherton of Ohio State University reviewed contemporary pottery and said: "Color is one of the most potent elements the potter has at his disposal. Yet our contemporaries regrettably repudiate it... When [earth colors] are used almost to the exclusion of any other colors, the results become monotonously somber..."

CM will gladly devote space to a discussion of this interesting subject. The above points of view are from two eminent potters: readers are invited to choose sides and let off steam.—Ed.

SMEAR CAMPAIGN

Gentlemen:

... I have just finished reading the Matney article [Underglaze Decoration, January] ... [It] mentions the green ware plate and applying the underglaze, and then—mind now—and then the clear glaze is brushed on over the dry underglaze, with nary a bisque fire between.

You folks mean to stand there and tell me that first brush coat of glaze won't pick up the dry powdery u.g. and smear the whole design from here to ... ? Oh, Come Now! ...

NIAGARA NELL

Niagara Falls, N. Y.

◆ And what do you think the manufacturers are bragging about when they say "won't crack; won't smear; won't rub off," etc.?—Ed.

CAST WARE SLIGHTED?

Gentlemen:

Your coverage of the 18th Ceramic National [December] I consider to be of

great interest; however, it caused me to wonder just what qualifications each work of art must possess before being judged the best. There appears to be no room within the winners' circle for that phase of pottery known as casting. We do not question the bronze work of sculptors as being art; yet, how does this greatly differ from casting with clay? If the American Potter is to give "impulse and flavor to our stale mass production" is it not reasonable to assume this may best be accomplished with an allied means of production? ... It is time we should take the cast pot out of the cellar and place it on the living-room table as an equal to thrown ware. Its form may lack the spontaneity required of the wheel but good design, alias art, is not as much a conditioning of the finger tips as the creativity of the mind ...

SANFORD W. FARWELL

Arcadia, Calif.

◆ Farwell's letter arrived just before CM introduced Dorothy Perkins' new series, "Models and Molds," (February). His sentiments are right in line with her thesis that cast ware can be as creative as ware produced by any other method.—Ed.

WHY THEY LIKE IT

Gentlemen:

... We have excellent publications dealing with handwoven textiles and now CERAMICS MONTHLY ... Your magazine is excellent. Our potters find much of value in it especially the photos of prize-winning pieces which give an idea of what to strive for ...

MARY E. BLACK

Nova Scotia Department of Trade
and Industry
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Gentlemen:

... I enjoy your modern approach and clearly written instructions so well I don't want to miss a copy. Being a home-base ment hobbyist this means much ...

MRS. E. L. LESLIE

Springfield, Ohio.

Gentlemen:

Your magazine is ... a constant source of reference for our staff, students and patients.

JOAN G. JENNERJOHN, OTR

Medical School
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisc.

Gentlemen:

I have found your magazine very helpful while learning the techniques of clay work and copper enameling. I am about ready to start teaching arts and crafts in public school and I am planning to use many of the articles in your magazine as a basis for the teaching of these subjects ...

ELAINE TIANO

South Gate, Calif.

Gentlemen:

... If everyone who writes us is a CM subscriber, you sure cover these United States and Canada. And rightly so ... Your magazine does not go in for the superficial but steers one right ... It's just darn good.

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MAY 4 - 8

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N. J.	Margaret M. Studio	N. J.	Mass.
N. J.	Ceramics by Marlene	N. J.	N. Y.
N. J.	Marx Brush Company	N. J.	N. Y.
N. J.	Mason Instrument Company	N. J.	N. Y.
N. J.	McCaleb Pottery School	N. J.	N. Y.
N. J.	Mountainaire Pottery	N. J.	N. Y.
N. J.	New England Ceramic Center	N. J.	Mass.
N. J.	Oakes Ceramic Studio	N. J.	N. Y.
N. J.	Olevia Ceramics	N. J.	Ill.
N. J.	Pasache Airbrush Company	N. J.	Conn.
N. Y.	Ceramics by Edna Parker	N. J.	Calif.
N. Y.	Piper Pottery	N. J.	N. J.
N. Y.	Popular Ceramics	N. J.	Mich.
N. Y.	Mary Raad Pottery	N. J.	Calif.
N. Y.	Regina's Ceramic Studio	N. J.	N. Y.
De.	Joy Reid Ceramic Studio	N. J.	N. J.
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N. J.	Ceramic Art Supply	N. J.	N. J.
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WHERE TO SHOW

★ national competition

CALIFORNIA, Sacramento

May 18-June 26

Kingsley Art Club 30th Annual Exhibition of arts and crafts at E. B. Crocker Art Gallery. Open to residents of the Central Valleys. Jury; entries due May 6, 7. Write Mrs. George C. Brett, 2757 Curtis Way.

CANADA, Montreal

May 13-27

Canadian Ceramics of 1955 at Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (then moving to Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, Toronto). Pottery, sculpture, enamels and decorative glass. Regional screening centers: Canadian Guild of Potters, c/o Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto; Canadian Handicrafts Guild, 2025 Peel St., Montreal. Work due Mar. 25-31; fee: \$2.50.

CONNECTICUT, Norwalk

June 12-July 10

6th Annual New England Show at Silvermine Guild of Artists to include ceramic sculpture. Eligible: artists born in New England or resident two months of year. Fee, \$3. Jury; prizes. Entry cards and work due May 6-9. Write Revington Arthur at Guild, Norwalk, Conn.

FLORIDA, Miami

April 24-May 8

★Third Annual Ceramic Exhibition sponsored by Ceramic League of Miami opens at Lowe Gallery, University of Miami, and circulates later among eight southeastern galleries. Ceramists including enamelist eligible. Jury; awards. Fee, \$3; blanks due April 1, entries April 6, 7. For information, write Marcelle Dunn, 908 Paradiso Ave., Coral Gables, Fla.

INDIANA, South Bend

May 15-29

Third annual Regional Ceramic Exhibition open to present and former residents of Indiana and Michigan within 100-mile radius of South Bend. Jury; prizes. Fee, \$2. Entry cards due Apr. 25; work, May 1. For blanks write South Bend Art Assn., 620 W. Washington Ave.

KANSAS, Wichita

April 16-May 17

★Tenth National Decorative Arts-Ceramic Exhibition. Jury; prizes, \$1,800. Fee \$3. Entries due March 8-20. Write Mrs. Maude Schollenberger, Wichita Art Association, 401 No. Belmont Ave.

KENTUCKY, Louisville

April 1-20

28th Louisville Art Center Assn. show, at J. B. Speed Art Museum. Art mediums and crafts including ceramics. Fee \$2.50. Jury; prizes. Entry cards due Mar. 11; work, Mar. 14. For details write Miriam Longden, Art Center Assn., 2111 So. First St.

MASSACHUSETTS, Springfield

April 3-May 8

Massachusetts Crafts of Today, fourth annual, at George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum. Open to all craftsmen in state. Fee: members of Massachusetts Assoc. of Handicraft Groups, \$1; non-members, \$2. Entries due March 8-12. For details write Robert W. Gray, 40 Highland St., Worcester.

OHIO, Toledo

May 1-29

37th Annual Exhibition, Toledo Area Artists at Toledo Museum of Art. Classes include ceramics, enamel on metal, sculpture in any medium. Eligible: residents of Ohio and Michigan counties comprising Toledo Retail Trading Area, and former residents within 15-m. radius of Toledo. Jury; cash awards. Fee: \$3; entries due Mar. 24-26.

Supply & Equipment Shows

Everything from glazes and green ware to findings and figurines may be seen at the annual ceramic supply and equipment shows held in different sections of the country. These shows constitute a common meeting ground where the supplier and the hobbyist can get together over products and ideas, a congregation of those who sell and those who buy materials used in ceramics. One of the high lights of each show is an exhibition of ceramics by hobbyists with prizes awarded by a jury. Information about these contests and other details may be obtained by writing directly to show managers. Of the half dozen or more shows coming up, details about the following have been released to date.

EASTERN CERAMIC HOBBY SHOW

May 4-8

At Convention Hall, Asbury Park, N. J. For information, write Jerry Gasque, Managing Director, 77 Ridgecrest Ave., Staten Island 12, N. Y.

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1955 South Carolina Arts and Crafts (Please turn to Page 36)

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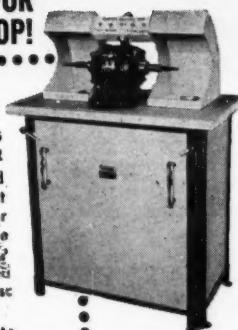
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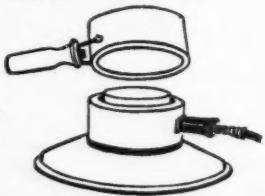
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suggestions

from our readers

LAUNDRY CARBOARDS

The cardboard backings which commercial laundries put inside men's shirts are useful in the ceramic workshop. They can be used to make patterns and templets and are fine for putting green ware on to dry. Another excellent use is to hold pieces which are being glazed: the cardboard can be turned like a wheel, eliminating handling.

—Violet Brown Shay
New Orleans, La.

CLASSROOM CODE

Because of the hundreds of pieces fired in the elementary school kilns, it is easy for some of the pieces to be returned to the wrong rooms and eventually to be permanently lost to the student. To help the kiln operator, a classroom code on each piece proves to be very helpful. In



addition to the initials of the student, add the initial of the teacher and the grade number or a similar code and then the kiln operator's difficulty will be completely eliminated.

—Kenneth Gogel
Cedar Falls, Iowa

WEDGING BOARD

A satisfactory wedging board can be made by cutting down the sides of a strong corrugated cardboard carton to an inch or so above its base and filling it with plaster. The cardboard sticks to the plaster and becomes its permanent frame. It is resilient enough to cushion the wedging blows so that even a relatively thin base beneath can withstand the wedging impact.

—Virginia D. Voelker
Asbury Park, N. J.

VIAL HOLDER

Here is one way to avoid knocking over tiny vials of gold, luster or overglaze while they are being used. Nail some deep bottle caps (like



ketchup caps) open end up to a thin board a few inches wide. Each vial can be placed in its own holder and is not only protected from being knocked over but also leans toward the user at a convenient angle.

—Dorothy D. Freas
Westfield, N. J.

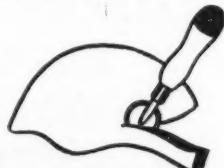
OILCLOTH TABLE TOPS

The cloth side of a piece of oilcloth is ideal to use on the table when doing hand-work because it prevents the clay from sticking. Also, when rolling clay slabs, you will find that the clay releases very easily. For a smooth, wrinkle-free surface, stretch the oilcloth and tack it with carpet tacks on all sides.

—Bonnie Staffel
Maumee, Ohio

CLAY CUTTER

The handiest gadget for cutting slabs of clay is the roller cutter used by paper hangers. This is particularly



useful when you work with drape molds. I go a step further and make my own cutter out of brass—to eliminate worrying about rust.

—Duane Harris
Canisteo Central School
Canisteo, N. Y.

Share Your Bright Ideas

CM pays \$1 to \$5 for suggestions used in this column. Send yours today along with photos or sketches if applicable. All items carefully considered. (We regret we cannot acknowledge or return items which are not used.)

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Bisque Press Molds

Press molds of clay fired to a durable bisque are offered by Charles Houston Mold Co., and are claimed to have a longer life than the softer plaster. A variety of subjects such as the alphabet, basic jewelry shapes,



religious motifs, flowers and leaves, and others are included in the various molds; one of the press molds has as many as thirty-eight designs.

Dealers are invited to write for the name of the nearest distributor. For a free list of the press molds now available, write to Houston at 3018 W. Bullard, Fresno, Calif. Please say CM.

Enameling Booklets

Handy, helpful guides for beginning enamelist are available at little or no cost from various suppliers and manufacturers. Among these introductory booklets are "Enameling on Copper and Other Metals," by Thomas E. Thompson, distributed free by Thomas C. Thompson Co., 1539 Deerfield Rd., Highland Park, Ill.; "Enamel-on-Copper Idea Book," available without charge from The Copper Shop, Dept. 34, 1812 E. 13 St., Cleveland 14; and "Amaco Metal Enameling," 25 cents, from American Art Clay Co., 4719 W. 16 St., Indianapolis 24, Ind.

New Casting Slips

A new line of casting slips is announced by Bell Ceramics, Inc., Route 10, Morris Plains, N. J. Included is a cone 6 porcelain slip which the manufacturer says has fine casting and draining properties, and excellent translucency when fired to maturity.

In the cone 06 range are a red slip and two white slips, one a fast-setting

production slip manufactured especially for studios. Write directly to Bell for full details and please say CM.

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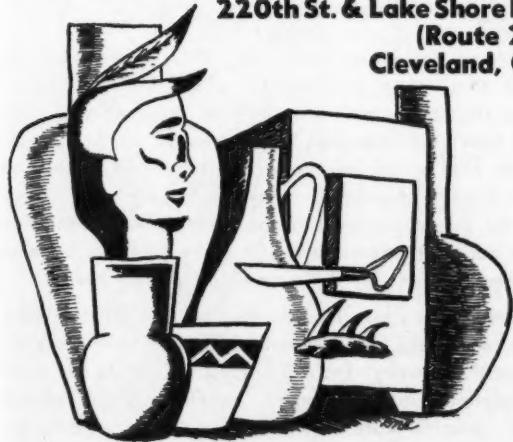
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spring has come . . .

. . . at any rate it's just around the corner. And CM is heralding its arrival with a special issue on Ceramics for Outdoor Living. No doubt you remember the special issue of Christmas ideas (last November), and you can be assured this special number will be equally exciting.

We won't let all the cats out of the bag; we will, however, give a few hints on what's in store. Our good friend (and yours, too), John Kenny, has worked up a beautifully illustrated how-to-do-it on a garden fountain—complete with water squirter. Tom Sellers shows how to throw large flat bowls which lend themselves ideally to outdoor use. Bea Matney demonstrates underglaze decorations on a patio snack set.

In addition—there are features on outdoor sculpture; cutting up cast green ware for candleholders; different forming methods for large shapes; bird houses and bird baths (you can have the cleanest and best housed birds in town); charcoal braziers; indoor-outdoor planters; and many other idea-loaded Suggestions, Briefs, and features.

enameling too . . .

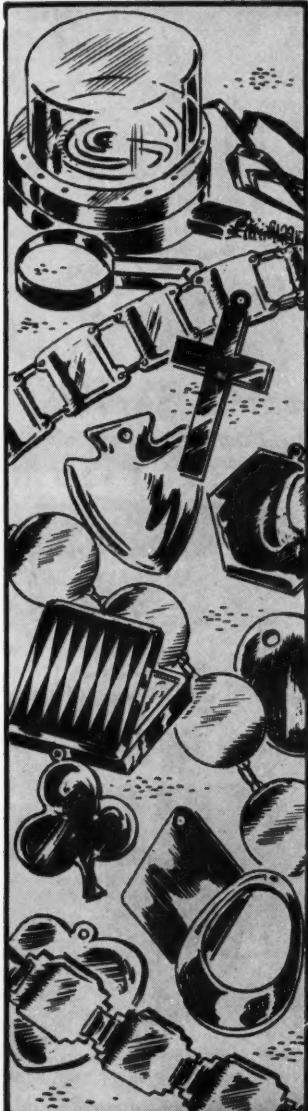
. . . has come (arrived, that is) if acceptance by schools and hobby enthusiasts is a measure. To help us please this large and ever-growing group, Kathe Berl, noted New York enamelist, has written an article on making big ones out of little ones; in other words, on how to make a large mosaic of many small enameled pieces. Ideal for the outdoors—as a table top or wall decoration in the patio, an enamel mosaic can be made by anyone, regardless of how tiny the enameling kiln may be.

And not too far off is the beginning of another illustrated series—this one devoted exclusively to the subject of enameled jewelry. Exciting jewelry techniques are carefully explored in this lengthy, detailed copper enamel series. Jean O'Hara's column of valuable information, of course, stays with us.

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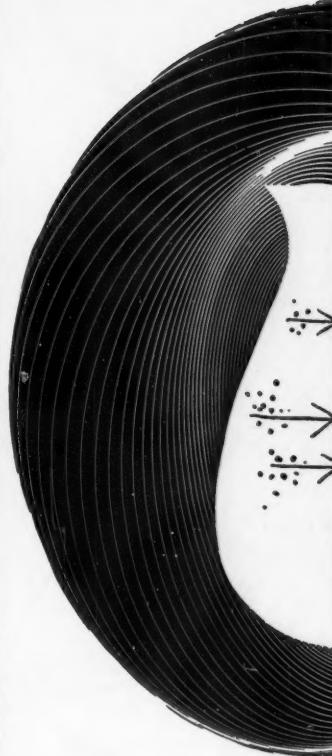
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CERAMIC EARRINGS

beauty that walks with you

by REX EIDSON

Irnamentation of the ears has *always* been considered a complement to womanly charm—even to goddesses, for the pre-Christian Greeks felt compelled to add fine, golden earrings to the figures of female deities in their temples.

In our own time the appeal of decorated ears is as strong as ever, and something new has been added. With screw-type lobe attachments replacing the pierced-ear variety, ceramic earrings have come into their own. There is no question of their popularity. The variety of shapes and colors is inexhaustible; inexpensive metal findings that work well are easily available. The combination of beauty, low cost and individuality more than compensates for the fragility of the medium.

Making handsome earrings by hand is not difficult if you keep two factors in mind: simplicity and the need for making two of a kind reasonably like each other. A modest array of equipment will take you all the way from forming through firing — fine-grained white or colored clay, glazes to fit, brushes, miscellaneous tools (knife, sgraffito and ball-end tools), wire mesh, and a small electric kiln.

Let us take, for example the formation of an earring shaped like a shallow, somewhat irregular shell. This is one of the easiest earrings to produce, and one of the loveliest; it may be left plain or modified to resemble a flower blossom (see photos on next page).

Two balls of clay about $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch in diameter will make a medium-sized pair. They should be *identical* in

size. If you have a sensitive scale, you can weigh them to be sure. Or you can equalize the portions by making a small coil of clay, slicing off sections of equal size and rolling them into balls. I do not like the method of cutting earring shapes from a rolled, flat slab. Balling and working the clay by hand produces a tougher, stronger finished ware. As you work, you must keep your hands damp, but not wet. A bowl of water at your elbow for dunking fingertips from moment to moment, and a dampened sponge, help to keep the clay pliable.

Shaping the shell-like earrings is actually like making a miniature pinch pot. You hold the small ball of clay in the palm of one hand, near the heel, and press with the tip of your finger, using enough pressure to spread or fan the clay out. (If the ball is tiny, use a ball-ended tool instead of finger.) A rolling motion quickly produces a saucer shape. The outer edges should be nearly paper-thin, the center somewhat thicker.

As you rotate your finger, the edges may develop small cracks, especially if you are using coarse clay or fine-grained clay that is slightly dry. But earrings with ragged edges need not be cast aside. They may be attractive that way; or, when the clay is leather hard, you can smooth the edges with a damp complexion sponge. Sometimes, with too-moist clay, you get the shape you want but it clings tightly to your palm. When this happens, wait a minute or two—clay next to the skin dries rapidly, shrinking enough to free itself.

(Continued on next page)

The shell or cup shape is attractive as it is. But you may want to scallop the edges (it takes practice to produce a matching pair!). Or you may want to produce a flower effect by adding clay screenings (forced through wire mesh), or a bead of clay with a tiny hole in it, at the center. Such centers are fixed in place with a single drop of slip. You can make petals, before attaching the center, by nicking the clay delicately and irregularly with a tool, smoothing over with a sponge when the piece is leather hard.

When it comes to glazing, it is well for a beginner to use viscous glazes that will smooth out on vertical surfaces without crawling. My advice is to stay away from colors that require special treatment; start off leisurely with a few opaque colors plus black and white.

I use a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch flat brush, well loaded with glaze. Both sides of the earring are brushed, alternately, with quick, outward strokes. If you glaze only one side, moisture sinks through and you have to wait until the entire piece is dry enough for the opposite side to take the glaze. A spot at the back must be left bare for attaching the metal finding later. (This area must be perfectly smooth; any noticeable irregularity will cause the binding cement to bubble when the finding is pressed in place.) The earring is glazed to about the thickness of a well-worn dime. If it has a center of clay screenings, this is nearly buried in glaze; during firing, the glaze sinks into each tiny aperture and, simultaneously, covers each strand of clay.

Many earrings are most attractive when covered simply with a good glaze, but others may call for something more. The petal edges of turquoise earrings, for example, might be splashed with drops of deeper blue or black. Deft application of touches of bright gold, palladium or china color add glamor to what would otherwise be too plain a set. Centers of flowerlike pieces are often spattered or lightly brushed across the top with bright gold.

Coming now to the firing, keep in mind that earrings are always made as thin as possible. In the green (unfired) stage, therefore, the ware is extremely fragile, and this must be taken into account in handling and firing. Never give green ware too much direct heat. Although small electric kilns do not have apparent hot and cold spots, there are two danger zones—near the element wires and on the floor. You can avoid possible difficulty by setting the earrings, both green and glaze, on a *throne* in the kiln. The throne can be cut from soft insulating brick—in a block about two inches square and as long as the kiln permits. No part of the block should be closer than two inches to any wire element. Low-fire studio clay is bisqued at cone 06, or about 1840°F; this temperature hardens the clay nicely yet leaves it porous enough to accept the right amount of glaze.

SHELL-LIKE cup for these earrings is made like a miniature pinch pot. The finger tip is pressed, with a rotating motion, into a small ball of clay to form the cup. Tiny clay screenings added at the centers give finished earrings flower effect. The jewelry shown on this and facing pages are by the author.



Green ware should not be stacked or even touching; each piece should sit by itself. Heavier, thicker green pieces may be placed closer to the elements than finer or thinner pieces. Particularly small and fragile items should be elevated and shunted toward the center.

You will have greater success firing the *glazed* pieces if you set each one on a small, round, unglazed button of clay. Balancing the earrings on these minute pedestals is a tricky proposition but your patience will be rewarded because the glaze matures better when heat can get to all the parts with equal intensity.

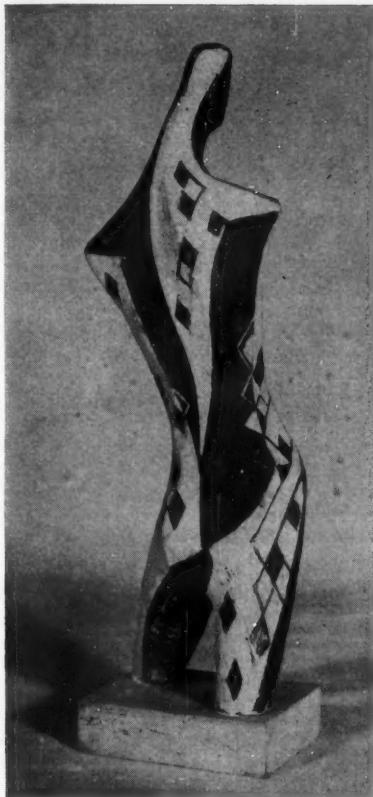
Earrings which are glaze fired several times, with careful timing to prevent fading of colors, come out softer in tone, richer in luster — more jewel-like and stronger because of more perfect bonding between glaze and body. On the basis of my experience, I would suggest that the best way to produce more beautiful earrings is to apply the glaze directly to the green ware (although, for the beginner, bisque firing makes these small, fragile pieces easier to handle), fire to the maturing temperature of the glaze, then refire at least two more times. If you allow several days to elapse between firings, any miniature flaws in the glazing will have time to show up and can be corrected before the next firing. [Ed. Note: *On the surface, refiring a piece may seem like an unnecessary extravagance; it is one solution, however, to the problem of obtaining a long soaking period at the end of the firing, in fast-firing kilns. This is particularly true with the small test kiln, often used for jewelry, which can fire to cone 04 in one-half hour, and is almost impossible to slow down.*]

Warning: when the time comes to take small glazed objects from the kiln, handle them with caution. They are very slippery. It is a good idea to have a cardboard carton along to receive each earring as you remove it.

Ceramic supply dealers and craft shops handle jewelry findings, and these may be purchased in small quantities, or by the gross if you plan to make many earrings. Numerous brands of cement are on the market, some better than others. Although I have tried most of them, I always go back to Dupont (acetate). It is easy to apply, goes a long way, is low-cost, and can be bought at most stores. Moreover, it holds with bulldog tenacity, a most desirable trait when you are making jewelry.

Findings are best attached in this way. A thin coat of cement is applied to the small bare area left on the back of the earring and to the concave part of the metal finding, and allowed to dry for half an hour. Then a drop of cement is placed in the metal cup, enough so that you can see the liquid rounded *above* the rim. The finding is pressed, with a quick turn of the wrist, exactly in place on the back of the earring, and held firmly for a few seconds. (Don't slide it around because this makes for poor adhesion.) If you have done a good job, a small, even overflow of cement will show around the edges of the metal; this is spread out evenly with a toothpick. Newly-backed earrings should be left face down for at least six hours—as insurance against the nuisance of having the finding come loose.

It takes patience to make earrings—to work the clay, to *manage* miniature objects, to fire and refire for the sake of color and strength. If you have the patience, making ceramic jewelry is a most intriguing occupation. It's not a matter alone of design and ceramic know-how; but more important, perhaps, of producing ornaments that women will want to wear. Earrings have to be more than beautiful in themselves; they have to enhance the beauty of the wearer. In other words, it's a case of beauty is as beauty does. And therein lies the challenge (*cherchez la femme*). •



COLOR painted on the planes of author's "Domino" is of primary importance. Engobes relate to form in some places, contradict it in others—causing movement or pause at will.

fingers. When all the chunks are together and well beaten, the block is left to stand uncovered at least until the next day. It is essential, for carving, that the clay be very firm (leather hard) but not too hard.

TOOLS: The tools and equipment I use for carved sculpture are a rather modest collection. There is the sturdy turntable on wheels (see January, page 18) that revolves when it is pushed; the block of clay to be carved is set on this. The whole thing stands on a table; as I work, usually sitting on the edge of the table, I can see all sides of the piece. Then there is the paddle (or a block of hard wood) for beating the clay; and a nylon cord (fishing leader works well) from 18 to 24 inches long, with a crossbar of wood at each end—this cord is used for cutting large chunks of clay away from the block to get to the rough silhouette of the sculpture. Modeling tools with wire ends are needed, too, preferably with the ends scored to slow up the process of cutting back each form; for engraving clay, I have a dull, soft, drawing pencil (the lead polishes and does not scratch or tear the clay). Two hacksaw blades are indispensable for scraping and texturing—one used intact, the other broken into several two- and four-inch pieces. Engobes and/or glazes will be needed, depending on the project; and, for applying these, a spray gun and brushes.

HOLLOWING OUT: For safety in drying and firing as well as for esthetic reasons, you hollow out ceramic sculpture. I always do it before the surfaces are textured or finished. The piece reconstructed in my previous article was such that it could be hollowed out from

(Please turn to Page 32)

the practical side of

CARVED SCULPTURE

by EDRIS ECKHARDT

In a previous issue (CM, January), the distinguished sculptor, Edris Eckhardt, revealed that carving from a solid block of clay is her favorite way of working, the method reserved for her most serious and significant pieces. At that time she reconstructed the process by which she produced a horse and rider sculpture (Homestretch, now owned by the Wichita Museum). The subject emerged from a "firm, resisting" block of clay. Now she describes in more detail some of the technical aspects—preparation of clay, hollowing-out, firing, etc.—Ed.

CLAY: When I plan to carve sculpture from a solid block of clay, the first practical consideration is the clay itself; its color, texture and condition are important. I usually use a good grade of red clay or Jordon or Monmouth; and texture it with from 10 to 40 per cent of commercial grog of a medium fine grade. The grog is thoroughly mixed and kneaded into the clay to produce an even texture—a very important point! I also color my clay, usually while it is in powdered form, with manganese, iron or copper oxide. (If you are not experienced in using oxides to produce interesting color in clay bodies, it would be to your advantage to start learning—and enjoying—the trick.)

With the clay body well mixed, I wedge as large a chunk as I can handle, from twenty to forty pounds at a time, on a sturdy table that has a tacked-on, heavy canvas cover. I wedge and wedge. It is tiring so I don't do it all at once. If a 200-pound block is needed finally, I wedge six or eight chunks, and carry them to the place where I intend to work. I set them together by slamming one block very hard on another, and beating them with a paddle of hard wood; I also score the pieces together with my



Photo: Syracuse Museum of Fine Art

MARKS of modeling tool and color treatment enhance emotion expressed in sculptor's work, "Conflict." Mane and other features were stained soft black; light-colored engobe was rubbed in tool marks. The color effect is transitional.

HIGH LIGHT ON ceramic lamps



by JOHN KENNY

Photo: Kagan-Dreyfuss, Inc.



MODERN lamps by young Americans suggest possibilities for variety in conventional base-and-shade units. Sgraffito-decorated lamp, above, is by Nancy Wickham Boyd; at left, a simple oval form by Rolf Key-Oberg.

Clay was one of man's first allies in his age-old fight against darkness. After he had learned to use a burning stick as a torch and then wanted something better, he turned to clay. From it he fashioned his first crude lamp. Today, with all the developments of modern design, lamps made of clay are still the most popular.

Making a ceramic lamp sets a problem that challenges the potter's technical skill and at the same time gives him the opportunity to do completely original work. Lamps can be made in so many ways, with such variety of form and decoration that the possibilities for creative design are almost limitless.

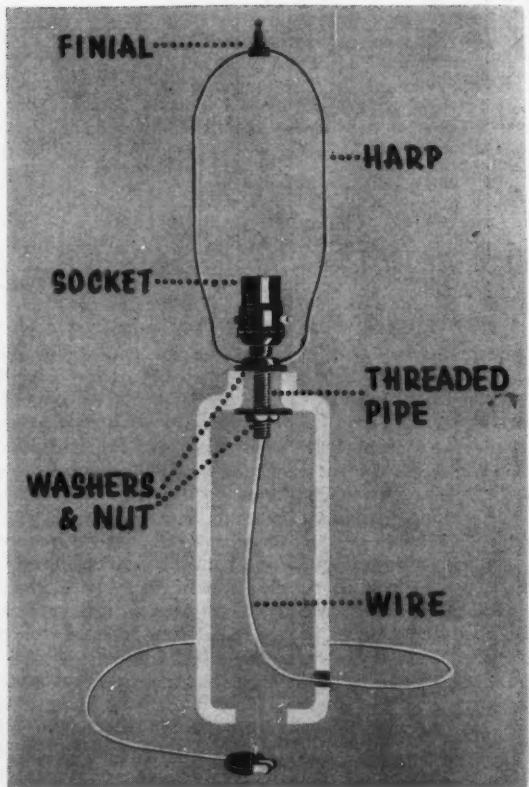
Most pottery lamps have a base that holds up a light fixture and a frame for the shade. Not all lamps need be designed this way by any means—you can do daring things with ceramic forms to achieve indirect illumination or combinations of light and sculpture. We'll discuss some of these in future articles; for the present, let us concentrate on lamps that consist of a base and shade.

This is the conventional type of lamp, but there is nothing conventional about the design of the lamps shown on these pages. The work of a number of young American potters, these objects are modern in feeling—well suited to contemporary decor.

One of the most efficient ways of making a lamp is to use a mold. In this method, the form is made in clay, then cast in plaster of Paris, a two- or three-piece mold being made from the plaster model. Clay slip is poured into the mold to produce the lamp. Cylindrical lamps can be thrown on the potter's wheel, too, but it takes considerable skill—particularly if the form is to be ten inches tall or more.

If you don't want to go to the trouble of making a mold and don't want to be limited to cylindrical forms, you can model a lamp directly by making a solid clay shape and hollowing it out, or you can build it by the coil or the slab method. Each of these processes is simple, requiring no more equipment than a few kitchen tools.

The photo-demonstration (facing page) shows the steps for making a rectangular lamp by the slab-building method. It is easy and fun to do. •



WIRING a lamp is not complicated when proper accommodations have been provided. Cross section shows the parts of the fixture and where they are placed. Arrangement works only for a lamp with a hole in the bottom; washer and nut are attached to the threaded pipe and the unit is pulled, with string or wire, through the bottom and into position.



Photo: Kagan-Dreyfuss, Inc.



DESIGNED for contemporary settings: lamps by Alexandre Giampietro, left; Tom Sellers, above; and another by Key-Oberg, right.

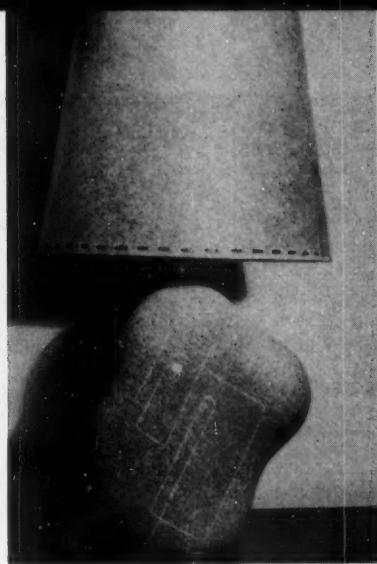


Photo: Kagan-Dreyfuss, Inc.



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ONE WAY to make a lamp base. 1. You start with a rolled-out layer of clay. Here it is being wrapped around a firm paper core, a quart-sized milk container covered with a layer of newspaper. The clay will overlap at the joining to make a neat fit, and excess will be cut off with a single knife stroke. 2. Joint is welded on the outside with a modeling tool. 3. The paper core is pulled halfway

out and the joint is welded on the inside; then the core is pushed through at the other end so the entire joint can be sealed without having to remove the support. 4. Top is added (the core still inside). This top is simply a flat piece of clay with a cube of clay welded to it. The unit has a hole cut through to accommodate the electric fixture (facing page).



5



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5. We feel free to try out a number of decorating ideas right on the clay; designs that don't please us can be rubbed out. A diamond pattern is pressed in the soft clay with a ruler (the inside core still supporting the piece). Added to the bottom is a temporary base which will be removed when the core is taken out. 6. Another

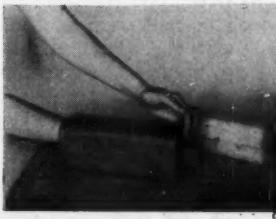


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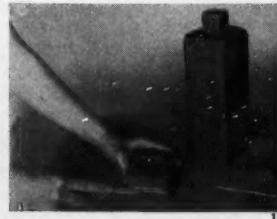


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decorating idea—this time with thin strips of clay. 7. Here, the design is made by imprinting with the cover of an olive jar and by pressing pellets of clay against the form with the end of a pencil. 8. Now we incise a pattern with a table fork, and like this one well enough to retain it.



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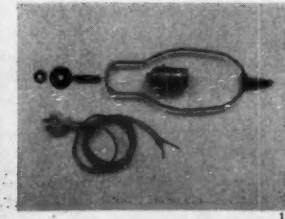


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9. Temporary base has been taken off and the core removed from the inside. (If you have trouble getting such a core out, just slide it from its newspaper covering and let the newspaper stay inside—it will burn out during firing and do no harm.) 10. The permanent base, or foot, is now constructed. Here you see it upside down. The



11



12

big opening is required so that part of the electric fixture can be drawn through later. 11. After the base is attached, a small hole is bored in the side to accommodate electric cord. 12. These are the component parts of the fixture; the cross section (facing page) shows how they go together.



Gardening is his hobby: Bates takes horticulture almost as seriously as he does enameling. He writes, lectures, wins awards in both fields.

PROFILE

Kenneth Bates

ENAMELIST

No small factor in Cleveland's reputation as a contemporary art enameling center is Kenneth Bates who for more than a quarter of century has taught and practiced the art in that city.

Now completing his twenty-eighth year as a teacher of design at the Cleveland Institute of Art, Bates has worked with two generations of students, some of whom have become well-known names in enameling. A prodigious craftsman himself, his work has won honors at home and abroad, including the top award at the Ceramic National in 1946. His enamelwork is represented in some thirteen museum and private collections. Authorship, too, is part of his achievement—and influence. His book, *Enameling Principles and Practices* ("exposing all the secrets of the trade"), was published in 1951, the first on the subject to appear in fifty years.

Enameling was rarely practiced in contemporary arts when Bates, as a young man newly come to Cleveland, turned to the craft as the one which intrigued him most. "I felt," he recalls, "that here was an exciting medium which had been more or less by-passed by the modern artist-craftsmen. The play of color against color, the study of depth of color, the limpidity of enamel tones which only this medium gives, constitute a life's work for me."

In this craftsman's professional as well as personal life, nature is the ever-recurring theme. For him, it is the *only* source for creative thinking and design. Growing things are the predominant motif in his enamelwork. Regardless of the manner in which he interprets it, inspiration for a design motif rarely comes to him from any other source, he has said recently. And, literally, he has surrounded himself with the source for he is a prize-winning, hobby gardener!

Versatile, working in all styles and techniques, Bates likes best, perhaps, to do special commissions such as an award or gift for a specific person or group. Here, he feels, is the real test of a designer, requiring flexibility and broad knowledge. He has no strong preferences when it comes to the technique to be used in the enameling, feeling only that the *manner* of working must fit the job to be done. Before he makes the original design, he knows definitely whether the piece is to be Limoges, *plique-à-jour*, cloisonné or inlay. Certain characteristic shapes, nuances of color, textures or edges, are appropriate for one technique and not for another, he explains; these must be taken into consideration from the beginning. Then there is the matter of scale and distance from which the piece will be viewed: a broad technique such as stencil or dry dusting, for example, may be more appropriate for a wall plaque than a detailed technique like cloisonné.

Unlike some craftsmen, Bates never *designs* on the metal, or improvises, as he goes along. His idea or plan is always completely worked out in advance on paper, in tempera or in tempera and water color. He likes the process of changing colors, shapes, juxtapositions and rhythms, on paper; but feels the enamels themselves are too permanent, precious and fluctuating for guesswork. Time is another factor; at the point of enameling he does not want to consume time correcting mistakes "which could have been caught in the working-drawing stage." The initial rendering on paper is followed so closely that it and the finished piece of enameling, at a distance, appear to be identical. This is his personal way of working. He does not say, however, that improvising with enamels cannot be effective; on the contrary, he advises it in the classroom.

Bates predicts an increasingly prominent role for art enameling in contemporary settings—enriching architecture (both interiors and exteriors) as well as complementing home decoration in the form of wall panels, table tops, trays, bowls and other objects. He foresees greater use of the medium for ecclesiastical objects and personal adornment. There is room, he believes, for more well-trained professional enamelists—as individual craftsmen and as associates of architects and interior decorators.

If you would be a professional, be somewhat confident first, he advises, that you have talent for designing in the larger sense, then avail yourself of a good art education plus as much of other liberal arts as time and money permit. There is no quick-course substitute for basic education, he cautions.

Bates has just turned fifty. He lives in Euclid, a suburb of Cleveland, with his wife—three children of the marriage are now grown and away from home. He has yet to make the enameled piece which he will prefer above all others (he has favorites, though, among the hundreds already done and, invariably, they are the ones which express his wonder at the forces of nature).

He is as fascinated with his chosen medium today as he ever was, so much so that he can and does say, confidently: "Unless at the age of fifty a craftsman is more inspired, more excited with the newness of his craft and the possibilities of experimentation in that medium, than he was at twenty-five, it has been a useless struggle."

It is obvious that his career has been no useless struggle. Bates' works exemplify his rule of life: do everything as well as you can—this is the only possible philosophy which enables a craftsman to live with himself. •



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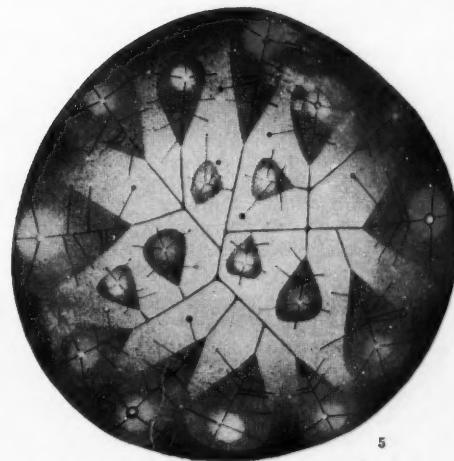
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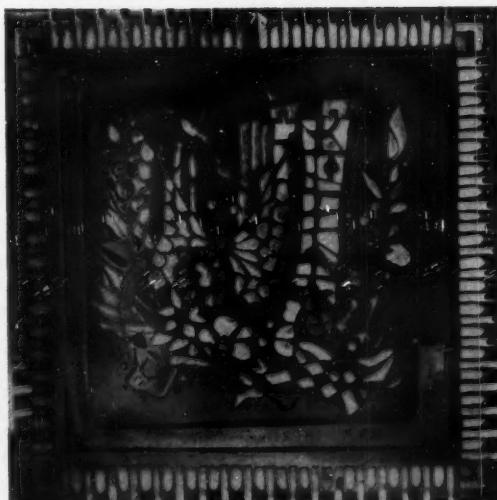
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1. Versatile, Bates works in all styles and techniques. His "Siamese Cat Sing ho" (3" x 5") is cloisonné with the colors separated by silver wire. The piece is done in opaque and transparent blues, browns and beiges, with overglaze shading.

2. He foresees enamels used again, as they were historically, to embellish churches and ecclesiastical objects. Wall font and crosses shown are among his own numerous works of this type.

3. Bates' "Two Owls in a Tree" won Special Award at the last Cleveland May Show. The birds are done in transparent enamels over gold and silver foil; background is in brilliant blues over white opaque; tree, in overfired overglaze colors.

4. Plate is one of pair done on commission as farm and garden awards. Nature, his favorite theme, is developed, here, around greenhouse. Technique is wet inlay on dusted ground.

5. In "Jade Plant," the enamelist "related motif to functional shape." The piece is done in opaque beige, grays and black.

6. "Window Picture" is plique-à-jour, a type of enameling that has the effect of stained glass. Transparent enamels are suspended in small openings in the metal; silver, in this case.



Throwing on the Potter's Wheel



MAKING A PITCHER

by TOM SELLERS

This is another in the author's current series. Demonstrations of throwing specific shapes, such as pots with lids, large plates, etc., are scheduled for coming issues.—Ed.

Making a pitcher on the potter's wheel involves several techniques which have not yet been covered in this throwing series. If, however, you have mastered throwing a cylinder (September), cutting the foot rim (January), and pulling a handle (February), you have well in hand the mechanics for making a pitcher.

The new techniques involve forming the spout and combining parts made separately; and, of even greater importance, the elements which make the finished pitcher function properly.

A pitcher must have a spout that will *pour* and a handle that will *lift* and *balance* the pot. In addition to being functional, these features must be aesthetically pleasing.

The spout must be wide enough to channel the liquid through it and it should be drip-proof. In general, a spout that levels out horizontally, then turns abruptly downward coming to a sharp edge, is one that is least likely to drip.

A hand-pulled handle (demonstrated last month) is thought to be the best complement to a thrown shape because it best retains the plastic quality of the clay. Special consideration must be given the problem of fitting the handle to the pot: it should be neither too heavy nor too slight for the size and character of the pitcher. Attaching the handle requires not only technical know-how but also the ability to place it where it will work best. It is not always easy to provide a handle which can give proper lifting balance and also please the eye. It is often necessary, therefore, to make a compromise between beauty and function, particularly in the case of exaggerated shapes. The pitcher demonstrated here does not offer any particular problems and is a good shape to try for beginning work. The construction is given in detail in the photos and following text.



For the loan of the Foster Potter's Wheel used in this demonstration, acknowledgment is made to Rovin Ceramics of Dearborn, Mich.

1. Throwing a pitcher means throwing a cylinder (a review of the September article in this series would prove helpful at this point): the amount of wedged clay needed for the desired pitcher size is shown on the wheel head ready to be centered, opened and raised into a cylinder.

2. The cylinder is pulled up with the wall thicker in the lower mid-section (shown by bracket). The finished shape will be bowed and this thicker section will provide the extra clay needed, preventing stretching of the clay and a thinner wall.

3. When the straight-walled cylinder is complete, the left hand, inside the pot, exerts more pressure than the right, forcing the belly of the pot to swell outward (the extra clay is now being used) until the desired shape is achieved. Then the constricted area and neck are formed to complete the basic shape of the pitcher. Constricting is done by starting the hands below the desired area with no pressure and gradually applying pressure as the area to be constricted is approached. Wrinkles usually form and are removed by pulling up the wall after each constricting process.



1. About the right size, clay wedged and ready to center.



2. Make a cylinder, leaving extra clay in the wall (bracket).



7. Pinch handle off lump; try it for size—and shape.



8. Roughen the wall. Be sure the handle is opposite spout.

4. The pouring spout is formed immediately. The thumb and forefinger of the left hand support the outside rim and push in very gently; the forefinger of the right hand gently pulls the spout out. Start well down inside the wall, increasing pressure as you come to the top. The finger pressure from within should be a gentle stroking one and the forefinger should be kept well lubricated with water. If the pressure is too abrupt, the rim may break or crack. For best pressure results, pull the spout directly out horizontally and shape the end downward.

5. To cut the piece free, a thin cutting wire securely held between the hands is slipped under the pot, hugging the wheel head. (If you are throwing on a tile or plaster bat, remove the bat with the pot on it.) The piece is then lifted with dampened metal lifters and placed on a tile. After slow drying in a damp box, to a leather-hard condition, it goes back on the wheel head so the foot rim can be cut in the base.

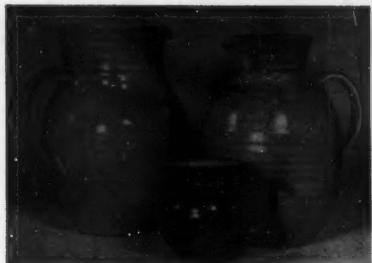
6. The handle is made immediately after the piece has been foot rimmed. While the handle is becoming firm enough to hold its shape, the area where it is to be attached is dampened with a sponge and then covered with a damp cloth so that it will retain its moisture.

7. The handle is pinched off the lump just where it begins to thin out and is tried in several positions on the pot to help determine where it fits best.

8. When you know where you want the handle, roughen the surface, then dampen with a little water or slip. Notice the pencil lying across the top; this is to help line the handle up with the spout. It should be directly opposite.

9. Extra thickness at the top of the handle is used to help integrate the handle with the pot. The handle should not be simply stuck on; rather, it should give the appearance of growing out of the pot.

10. The bottom of the handle is attached by pressing the tail into the scored area. Here, too, it should be well thumbed and integrated into the pot. Notice the right hand supports



Three of Sellers' wheel-thrown pitchers.

the inside of the pot against the pressure from the outside.

11. If there isn't sufficient clay in the handle and the flow from the pot is interrupted, add a small coil of clay and work it in well with a modeling tool. After careful sponging and cleaning up, the pitcher is set aside to continue its slow drying.

The technical aspects of the preceding instruction can be accomplished quickly; however, the other important features—such as the shape of the pot, a good spout and handle, proper type of foot treatment—will take longer to master.

Besides experimenting on your own spouts and handles, observe other pottery closely. When you see a spout that pours well, study it to discover why. The same for handles: lift pitchers, both empty and full, to discover whether they balance and function properly. See if they please the eye as well. You can learn a great deal by this type of observation; if you think someone's work is good, try to incorporate those qualities in your own work. By the same token, if you find pieces that do not please you, try to isolate the offending features and avoid them in your work. •



1. Use extra clay for bowing pot; now construct top.



4. Form pouring spout immediately, with gentle strokes.



5. Cut from wheel with wire and remove with special lifters.



6. When clay has stiffened, dampen area to receive handle.



7. Integrate it with the pot by careful thumbing and then . . .



10. . . . do the same at the bottom. (Hand inside for support.)



11. Work in a small coil if needed.





Ash tray by Bob Baldwin



**the underglaze
decorating project**

Rubber Resist (mask) Decoration

This is the third in a series of monthly articles on prepared underglazes—specifically for the hobby decorator.

demonstrated by **BEA MATNEY**

DECORATING with rubber resist (called *mask* by the commercial suppliers) is like decorating with a *liquid stencil*. Instead of laying a paper stencil down on the piece to be decorated, you paint the stencil on with a brush—the stencil in this case being the liquid rubber. The liquid rubber dries quickly and it is quickly and easily peeled off just as a paper stencil would be peeled off.

The rubber resist technique has its advantages over the paper stencil method: you are not limited to flat surfaces or, at best, shallow curves. A rubber mask can be painted on a sharp curve or even a square corner—a feat which would be impossible to achieve with a paper stencil. Another decided advantage is that you can paint a decoration *in reverse*; that is, if the decoration is painted on with the rubber mask, underglaze applied over all, the rubber resist then peeled off, you will wind up with a decoration showing your brush strokes *in the color of the body* against a background of your colored underglaze. The Oriental motif on the deep bowl (shown below) was done in that manner. The white decoration is merely the white body showing through the dark underglaze—the piece covered over all on the inside with a semi-mat glaze.

On the ash tray (top of page) the rubber mask was used to achieve a clear background for fine brush and sgraffito decorations by protecting certain areas from a spatter effect. The identical technique is demonstrated step-by-step on the ash tray on the facing page.

1. The green ware has been carefully cleaned with a damp sponge to remove all surface dust, oily finger prints, and other foreign matter. It is being completely covered with underglaze color. To assure a smooth even coat without streaks, Mrs. Matney will apply three coats, each brushed on in a different direction. Note that her underglaze has been poured into a small container to prevent the reserve quantity from becoming accidentally contaminated, and to make it easy to see that the brush is filled each time.

2. The underglaze dries quickly and the areas to be masked off are sketched in with pencil. These areas are then painted with the rubber mask. The mask has been brushed into the center circle and is not yet dry as



evidenced by the fluid, milky appearance.

The rubber mask is at proper brushing consistency when you buy it. It should not need any additions. If, after standing, it becomes too thick for good brushing, you can thin it a little with diluted (50-50) household ammonia. And if you want to make it easier to clean your brush when you are through, dip the brush first in glycerine, squeezing the excess out gently and then dipping into the rubber mask. (For details on the glycerine idea, see BRIEFS, February, page 26). The brush must be cleaned immediately after using, in the dilute ammonia. Once the rubber dries in the brush, the brush is ruined. Reserve one brush for all your rubber resist work.

3. The last small area is being masked off. When dry, the mask should appear slightly cloudy, or milky. If it is quite transparent, it may be too thin an application and will be difficult to peel off. In that case, brush another coat on to give it greater thickness.

4. Spattering with a contrasting color is done over the entire piece using the toothbrush-strainer technique. The toothbrush is dipped in the underglaze color, excess drained off and then vigorously scrubbed on the screen.

5. With the spattering completed, the mask is easily peeled off by pricking under a corner with a sharp pointed tool. Since some of the areas were protected by the rubber mask, they remain perfectly clear—free from the spattering.

6. The clear areas are now decorated with fine brush strokes and sgraffito. Don't wait too long to sgraffito through the underglaze. It does become quite difficult to cut through if it is allowed to dry thoroughly.

7. With the decorations completed, the tray is covered with clear glaze. You can spray or dip, of course; Mrs. Matney here is demonstrating with the brush. To assure complete coverage, three coats will be applied, each brushed on in a different direction.

8. The finished piece—after firing.

It is a good idea to first work out your decorations on paper, then sketch them lightly in pencil on the greenware before decorating. The pencil marks will burn out without leaving any blemishes. Planning beforehand will help you come up with a well-integrated decoration.

If you are short on decorating ideas, review the DECORATING LESSONS which started in the April, 1954 issue of CM. Also, the design and decorating books which are readily available will offer thousands of ideas and variations. •



1. First, underglazed overall



2. Rubber mask, brushed on ...



3. . . . in certain areas



4. Spattered with toothbrush



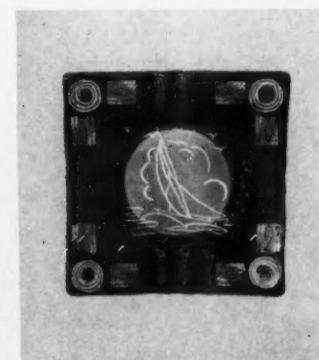
5. Rubber peeled off



6. Fine brush and sgraffito . . .



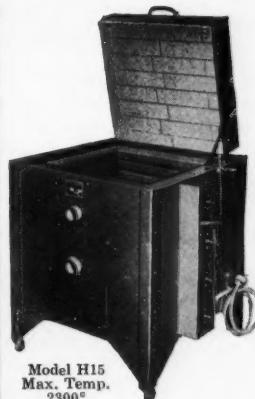
7. . . . followed by clear glaze



8. One firing—the finished piece

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slab-build a container

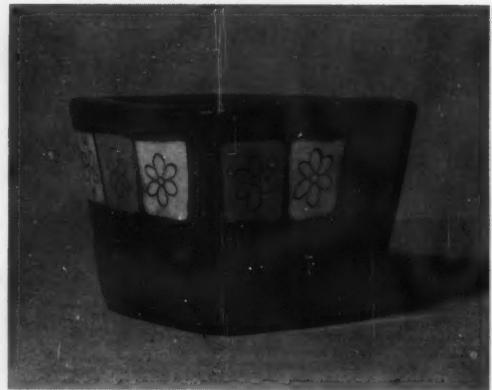
Bonnie is here again (remember "Operation Toadstool," CM, December?)—this time she demonstrates the making and decorating of a container.

1. The shape is boxlike. The method is slab-building. Using a paper pattern, Bonnie cuts the five parts from a slab of clay that has been rolled to even thickness.

2. The edges to be joined are roughened with a modeling tool and moistened with either water or slip so they will stick together well. To make the joining even more secure, a thin coil of clay is worked into each seam.

3. This roughening of the edges is *very* important. Bonnie can tell you what happens when the joining isn't good enough (a piece can c-r-a-c-k apart during drying and firing!). The banding wheel, by the way, makes it much easier to turn the piece around as you progress. When welding is done, the corners are smoothed and rounded by gentle stroking.

4. The piece has been allowed to dry—slowly and thor-



oughly; then bisque fired. Now Bonnie adds a simple decoration. She paints a border of squares in contrasting-colored underglazes; then, with a pointed tool, scratches a flower-petal design through the underglaze (the sgraffito technique). The container is finished with a clear glaze overall.

Any box type of object can be made by this slab-and-welding method, and the possibilities for decoration are unlimited.—*Phil Allen, Columbus, Ohio.*



1



2



3



4

decoration cut-and-carve

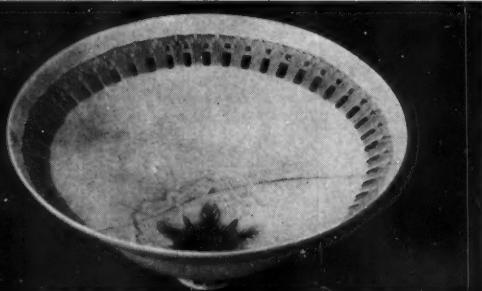
successfully: the clay must not be so hard that it breaks out in areas where you don't want it to, or so pliable that it pushes out of shape as you work.

The process is one of cutting and modeling. You cut through the clay with a finepointed tool (or knife) and slightly model or round the edges with a duller-pointed tool (a ceramic lace tool is ideal). In other words, you carve the decoration.

To keep the clay from becoming brittle, it should be dampened occasionally and lightly with a sponge. If you should be interrupted at your task and have to leave the piece, cover it with damp cloth or plastic so it won't dry out. Once the carving is completed, the piece can be finished (light sponging) and glazed in the same manner as any other ware.



photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art



Porcelain bowl with pierced border by Adelaide Robineau.

Pierced decoration is another technique which may well be employed in contemporary ceramics. In the past, it's most extensive use, perhaps, has been in the rice ware or Gombroon ware of the Orient. There, the glaze is managed in such a way that it fills the carved-out areas, creating a delicately translucent effect.—N. M., Duluth Minn.



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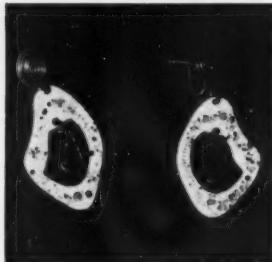
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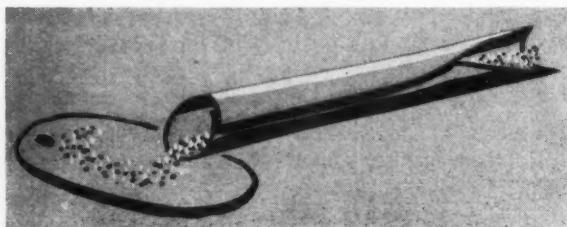


applicator for crumbs

If you have worked with small lumps or tiny crumbs of enamels or glass to produce jewel effects, you know they can be troublesome: putting them exactly where you want them—especially in confined areas—is not always easy. The shaker tube shown here is designed to alleviate this difficulty.

The tube is easily made by wrapping aluminum foil or 36-gauge copper around a pencil. The outlet at the bottom can be adjusted to any diameter you like. In use, the tube filled with the tiny crumbs of glass is placed close to the surface to be decorated and the contents allowed to flow out. The rate of flow can be controlled to a degree by pinching the thin-walled tube at the bottom. Tiny areas can easily be decorated; and, on larger areas, interesting patterns can be worked up. Control is easier and the pattern more spontaneous than it would be if you pushed the glass particles into place with a tool.

Regarding the particles, you can find many crumbs in the bottom of your lump-enamel containers or you can make your own by crushing glass and screening out the fine powders.—Peg Townsend, Tucson, Ariz.



a brief on briefs

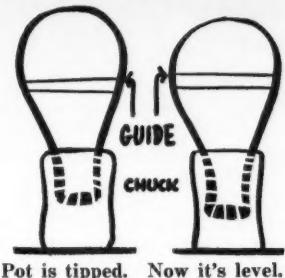
Like the other sections of CM, the CM BRIEFS are *by and for* the readers. This section was designed to accommodate instructive information that was too detailed to be handled as a SUGGESTION and not long enough to be handled as an individual feature.

Where's your BRIEF? Many of the procedures you now consider routine may be new and helpful to others. If you benefit from the ideas of others, pay them back with ideas of your own. Many of your ideas will lend themselves to use as CM BRIEFS, so don't you dismiss them as being unacceptable: let us be the judge. Let the CM editors consider your glazing and decorating ideas, forming techniques, short cuts and how-to's. CM will pay you for each item accepted.

If you have photos or other illustrations, fine; but they aren't necessary. CM's staff will work up the illustrations that the item requires.

To quote Longfellow: "Give what you have. To some one it may be more than you dare to think." —L. G. F., Columbus, Ohio.

guideline for
foot rimming



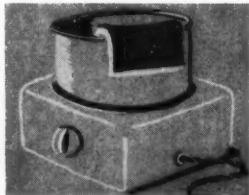
One way of managing a small-necked pot when it comes to making the foot rim is to set the piece, inverted, in a chuck or cradle on the wheel. But before proceeding to cut the rim, you must be certain the piece is absolutely level, or centered, in the chuck. This can be quite a problem, but there is a simple way of solving it. The trick is to have a guideline to check against.

After you finish throwing and while the pot is still centered upright on the wheel, band it with a line made with a pencil or stick. (Support the marker against the wheel frame to hold it level.) This line is your guide.

When you are ready to cut the foot rim, invert the pot in its cradle, revolve the wheel slowly and make another line above or below the original one. If the two lines are parallel, the pot is level and you can proceed; if not, the pot is in a tipped position and must be adjusted in the chuck until you can make a line that parallels the guide.

That's all there is to it, except that the lines may have made depressions in the clay. These can easily be sponged away; or filled in, later, with dry powdered clay, the same clay as was used for the pot (of course).—*Mrs. Ben Roth, Elyria, Ohio.*

wax wick
for dry feet



To prevent glaze from sticking to places where it is not wanted, such as the base or foot of a piece, wax or paraffin does the best job. If a very thin coating of wax is placed on the surface before the piece is glazed, you can be sure it will remain completely free of glaze.

One of the easiest ways to apply the paraffin involves a small metal container, a hot plate, and a wick consisting of a piece of felt.

Molten paraffin about $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch deep is maintained in the metal container (a coffee can serves the purpose). A strip of felt a couple of inches wide is immersed in the paraffin and allowed to hang over the edge of the container. Since the capillary action of the felt is continuous there is always some molten wax at the edge of the container. The cold ware is stroked across the felt where it picks up a protective film of wax; and then the piece is glazed. Glaze will not adhere to the waxed surface, even if the entire piece is dipped in glaze. The wax burns out in the kiln with no ill effects to the ware.

Although the apparatus is extremely simple, it is a rather involved procedure if an individual makes only a few pieces per month. For the busy studio or craft center, however, such an arrangement is quite helpful to the students; and, of course, it is a wonderful timesaver for anyone producing in quantity.—*Peter David, Chicago, Ill.*

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Carved Sculpture

(Begins on Page 19)

the bottom. The walls were made about $\frac{1}{2}$ - to $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick throughout, and punctured with small vent holes.

If a piece does not lend itself to digging out from the bottom, you have to cut it into sections to be dug out separately. *Conflict* and *Domino* (this page) were done that way; each was cut horizontally into three parts, comprising roughly a bottom, middle and top section.

Before such an operation, I lightly mark where the cuts are to be, and across these light markings, I make 3-inch-long lines at about 2-inch intervals. The last are guide lines; when I am ready to put the sections together again, I can match the lines. (Slip blurs the cut edges, and if it weren't for the guide lines you might have to shove the sections around to get them to fit.) The sculpture is cut apart by firmly and smoothly drawing a nylon cord through at the points indicated. Each section is laid on a feather pillow so that it will not warp.

I dig the top section out first, lay it back on the pillow, and proceed to the next. The walls are left progressively thicker: the top section is usually $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick; the next, a little thicker; and the bottom, usually $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick. *Never* have the top the heaviest.

The sculpture is fitted together again with heavy slip made of the same kind of clay as the carving, minus the grog. This slip is creamy smooth, about the consistency of apple butter. The cut edge of each section is roughened (I use a table fork for the purpose) and covered with about a fourth of an inch of slip. All areas to be joined are treated in this manner.

The bottom section, the one nearest the base, is the first to be joined of course. Before putting two pieces together, I let them stand five minutes or until the slip-covered edges become tacky. Then, guided by the vertical lines, I fit the sections in place and press firmly until the thick slip oozes out in a wide band. *This slip is not*

scraped off. I let the work stand for half an hour or so; and, if there is another section to be joined, add it in the same manner. When the sculpture is whole again I cover it lightly enough so that air can circulate, and leave it until the next day, or longer if necessary. Then, when the slip has become firm, I press it right back into the sculpture, using a wooden modeling tool in cross-hatch fashion. Never scrape away any of the sealing slip; just press it firmly back into the clay.

GLAZING: In my previous article I spoke of careful *color planning* for the horse and rider in order to achieve the suggestion of speed and a quality of somber mood. Always use color thoughtfully, sparingly and carefully. Be sensitive about whether it needs to be sprayed on or applied by hand; this can make a world of difference in a finished piece. Be cautious of shiny glazes and great value contrasts unless they are intentional.

In most cases I use engobes with some glaze mixed in (about 1 part glaze to 7 to 10 parts engobe). This imparts richness to the engobe which otherwise would have a parched look, and prevents powdering or chipping off during firing. In spraying, it is a good idea to let the clay body show through a bit; it gives a sense of bigness and intactness to the sculpture.

A word of caution: when you are spraying glaze on unfired clay, keep the gun moving all the time; and, if you want more than one coat, give the first coat time to set firmly. If you hurry the process, streaking and running will result and this is difficult to repair. I spray a final heavy coating of gum solution as a protection against powdering off of the glaze which can occur when heavy sculpture is handled and loaded into the kiln.

FIRING: Slow drying and slow firing are essential. When firing carved sculpture that is *large and heavy*, with walls of uneven thickness, I set it on radiating stilts or round sand so it can shrink easily in the kiln. This eliminates base-cracking. You have to re-

(Please turn to Page 34)

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Q. Can you tell me what type of clay or body is best suited for making dishes to be used for baking purposes?

A. There is a variety of things that you might try.

As you might suspect, the best type of body would be one that has a low thermal expansion coefficient. Toward this end a high talc body would be best. However, high-fired stoneware is excellent and so is well-vitrified red clay. At the other extreme, Mexican ware, which is ideal for oven use, is a rather sandy, immature, red earthenware.

It seems that you might try just about anything you have available and run some tests in your own kitchen oven to see how they hold up after repeated use. Of great importance is a well-fitting glaze to prevent immediate or delayed crazing.

Q. What is the best way to sign a finished copperenameled piece?

A. Liquid metallic lusters are most often used, the most common being gold, platinum and palladium. [For details on how to handle them, see Jean O'Hara's article, January.] Another widely used material is prepared overglaze color which can be applied with a brush or pen and fired at about 1400°F.

Q. Can you advise me regarding the use of feldspars? I make my own glazes and find that my shelves are heavy with many varieties of spar, yet I keep ordering more because of the demands of different recipes.

A. There is really no reason to stock up on "57 Varieties" of feldspar. It is true they vary in composition; but the variation is not enough to warrant having more than two or three varieties on your shelf. At most you would want a soda spar, a potash spar, and perhaps Nepheline Syenite.

If you are concerned about the substitution of one spar for another, make small test batches of your glaze and try them on test tiles. From the results you can determine whether minor adjustments are necessary. In her article on porcelain, Dorothy Perkins offers some sound advice regarding the use of materials which you have on hand: see the April 1954 issue.

Q. All of my clays, glazes, and various firing techniques are keyed to my 11 x 11 x 11" electric kiln. I am very much interested in a very small kiln for firing test samples, small amounts of jewelry and the like, when I cannot wait for a full kiln load. I'm told, however, that the "test kiln" would give me quite different results from my larger kiln because it fires so quickly. Can you offer some comments?

A. I don't believe the problem is as acute as your advisors make it. Although there would no doubt be differences in some results, in many cases there would not be any noticeable difference. I know of many professional potters who fire test trials as well as small pieces in an electric kiln about the size of yours, and fire larger pieces in a large gas-fired kiln. Certainly there would be much greater difference in results in this case, yet they find it to be a very satisfactory procedure. The very small test kiln is becoming more and more popular because it can give glaze test results so quickly and because it is so handy for firing small pieces.

Direct your inquiry to Questions Editor, c/o Ceramics Monthly, 3494 No. High St., Columbus 14, O., enclosing stamped reply envelope. Questions of general interest appear in this column.



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Carved Sculpture

(Continued from Page 32)

member that you are not firing pottery but something which must be treated as a solid. There is more stress and strain than in the case of a symmetrical pot which has thinner walls. I take large sculpture through the moisture-evaporation stage and the quartz-change stage in a long, slow firing cycle. In the first ten hours, the kiln temperature is raised very gradually to 900°F., (using low-switch only in electric kiln); in the next five hours, very gradually to 1500°F., (on medium switch). After that the danger is over and you can raise the temperature as fast as you like.

Do you know that a long, slow firing will give a stronger, harder body (with no risk of blowing or cracking) than will a fast firing to the same temperature? If you use an electric kiln, as I usually do, the cost is little more than for a rapid firing. Don't attempt in any way to hurry the cooling process; it is a dangerous thing to do with large sculpture. Ordinarily I wait two days, and unload a large piece only when it has cooled to room temperature in the kiln with the door tightly shut.

The sculptor in ceramics often feels like a juggler working with three elements. There are the struggle to communicate the idea or feeling, the task of doing it in such a way that it becomes a work of art, and the application of such technical knowledge that the work can exist and endure. You seek to bring an inner image into concrete form, using ideas, forms and feelings that are universal yet new; this is the quality that holds the audience and brings them back to look again. The object must also be sound in form, design, color, and show respect for the material of which it is created. The emotional impact should be sincere, never theatrical. This is sometimes hard to handle.

All the time you are struggling with the matter of deep inner content, the content of this particular thing, you must be alert to something else—the rules of art. But you still cannot relax, for the technical facts, such as we discussed above, must be remembered. These are so very important; without technical knowledge there can be no finished sculpture.

You can see why the sculptor sometimes feels like the juggler. But you have to manage to keep all three departments under control if you expect to give a good performance. •

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The Overglaze Page

by ZENA S. HOLST



Ground laying, in the true sense of the term (as applied to china painting), means *dusted on*. Do not confuse this method with that of the tinted background. Although the same mineral colors are used for both techniques, the resulting effects are entirely different.

Ground laying is generally used for divided areas in conventional patterns, for bands, and for sections of a background or border. The finish is opaque, like enamel; however, this method enables you to successfully cover large spaces that cannot be covered with enamels. The effect is flat in comparison to the inlaid or relief effect obtained with enamels. Beautiful designs may be executed with this opaque finish, as part of the pattern, in contrast to metals, lusters and translucent painting with mineral colors. To ground lay an area is the only way to obtain a pure solid color in one firing, such as an intense black. The process is simple but there are a few pertinent rules to observe.

The medium is called *grounding oil*; sometimes Royal oil because the technique was used in the old Royal Worcester paintings. I have found the consistency of this oil to be of various degrees of heaviness, as supplied by different companies. The oil must be applied quite heavily, but often it is too thick in the bottle to brush on smoothly. In this case, it must be thinned down with turpentine. The proper consistency is learned by experience. The addition of too much turpentine will cause too fast drying so that there will be no adherent quality to receive the color.

The design is first drawn on the piece to be decorated and the oil is painted over the areas to be dusted. Apply it with a flat, camel hair brush as smoothly as possible. Each space must be filled in well up to the outline; any weak spots will show in the finish. This oil is artificially colored very dark to help you see whether you have a smooth application. The oiled areas are next patted with a silk pad to remove brush strokes or unevenness.

GROUND LAYING

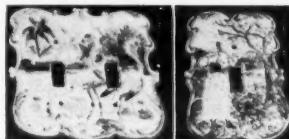
It is advisable to use two thicknesses of Chinese silk so that the tackiness of the oil will not pull the cotton through the silk. The pads are otherwise prepared the same as for patting tinted backgrounds. If the oil is of proper consistency, the painted surface will become tacky—and it must be tacky to receive dry powder. The length of time it is allowed to set, before the dusting, results in a heavy, medium or light application of the color.

Any mineral color may be used for ground laying. The choice of color depends entirely on the design and combination of techniques to be used. The mineral pigment is prepared by pouring dry powder (it takes a great deal) on the grinding glass, and grinding with a palette knife until there is no grittiness. The powder is then picked up with a small piece of cotton, a portion at a time, and shaken onto the oiled surface—that is, *dusted on*. You may prefer to apply the powder with a large, fluffy, camel hair brush. In any event, the idea is to drop plenty of dry color all over the oil without disturbing the oil itself.

Use all the color the oil will hold. Push surplus powder around lightly with the cotton or brush, being careful not to scratch the surface. When the oil cannot hold any more powder, it will look dull. If there are weak spots that look wet, add more color. If the oil was applied too heavily in the first place, or not patted enough, it will still look wet, in which case all of it should be cleaned off with turpentine and redone. The dusted area must have a solid look and an even, velvety appearance. There is no way to patch up defects, so if it is not perfect, you might better remove it as this point than to go through the exacting work of cleaning up the edges of the design.

Surplus powder may be brushed off and put back on the palette with a clean piece of cotton. I prefer, however, one of the large duster-brushes. These are Oxhair, often called Badger Blenders. In fact, I use the duster—

(Please turn to Page 40)



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A

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Itinerary

(Begins on Page 8)

Exhibition at Columbia Museum of Art. Jury selected. Write John R. Craft, Director of Museum.

WEST VIRGINIA, Huntington

April 3-24

Annual Regional Exhibition 80 at Huntington Galleries. Fine arts and crafts. Fee: members of Tri-State Creative Arts Assn., \$2; others, \$3. Entry cards due Mar. 15. Write Gallery for details.

WHERE TO GO

COLORADO, Colorado Springs

March 15-April 5

Pre-Columbian Art; 80 examples include decorated pottery, figurines. At the Art Center.

ILLINOIS, Urbana

March 13-April 3

American Craftsmen, 1955, part of Festival of Contemporary Arts, at University of Illinois; represents more than 50 craftsmen including ceramists.

IOWA, Sioux City

March 14-April 1

Contemporary Crafts: Fire and Metal at Sioux City Art Center, Commerce Building.

LOUISIANA, New Orleans

through March 22

54th Annual Spring Exhibition at Isaac Delgado Museum of Art includes creative craftwork.

MICHIGAN, Detroit

through March

1955 Michigan Artist-Craftsmen exhibition, Detroit Institute of Arts.

MISSOURI, St. Louis

March 7-April 4

Annual Missouri Exhibition, City Art Museum; fine arts and crafts.

NEW JERSEY, Asbury Park

March 7-13

New Jersey Society of Ceramic Art: members' work and demonstrations, at Cavalcade of Progress, Convention Hall; evenings; Sunday afternoon.

NEW YORK, Buffalo

March 2-April 3

21st Annual Western New York Artists exhibition includes ceramics. At Allbright Art Gallery.

PENNSYLVANIA, Philadelphia

March 30-May 1

Pottery by Vivika and Otto Heino at Philadelphia Art Alliance, 251 So. 18 St. Through March 27, Anthony Buzzelli's enamels-on-steel.

PENNSYLVANIA, Pittsburgh

through March 14

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WASHINGTON, Seattle

March 6-April 6

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Enameling on Metal

by JEAN O'HARA

EFFECTS & DEFECTS

EFFECT: Bubbling Through

It is perfectly legitimate, and good enameling, for the craftsman to capitalize on qualities which are inherent to the medium, and on firing and application techniques which add interest to the finished piece. The effects obtained cannot, of course, substitute



for thoughtful design. When that happens the medium controls the craftsman, instead of vice versa; the enamelist becomes overly dependent on these effects.

One of the effects peculiar to, and characteristic of, enamel is bubbling which is often used, especially as an edge treatment, to enhance pieces. *It comes from a soft opaque bubbling up through a transparent coat.*

How to do it

This is the way it is done. When the piece has been counterenameled and cleaned, a heavy coat of soft opaque color, such as white, is applied and fired. A thin coat of a transparent enamel is then added. In the second firing, the piece is given a little extra heat, say about 1550°F., and a little extra time in the kiln—until the white begins to pop up through the transparent, giving a mottled effect. The details given here are important. If any of the conditions are lacking you may produce only a smooth unbroken coat of transparent color over opaque.

Density of the mottling can be controlled by the length of firing time. You can remove the piece from the kiln when only a few white flecks have appeared, or leave it until the color effect is predominantly white.

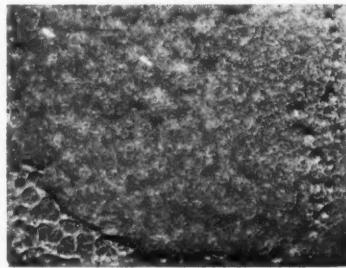
If you want only the edge of a piece to be mottled, the technique varies slightly. You first apply a transparent color to the entire surface and fire; apply the opaque around the rim and as far toward center as desired and

fire; cover again with a transparent and fire high. The mottling will appear only where the opaque has been applied.

A variation can be obtained by firing a heavy coat of soft flux directly on clean copper, followed by a thin transparent color overfired on the flux. In this case, the flux breaks through in small amber flecks.

DEFECTS: Dirty Metal

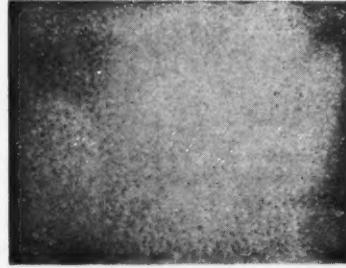
This unhealthy looking specimen is a perfect example of what can happen when enamel is applied to a greasy metal surface. Notice particularly the lower left corner where



the enamel has chipped away; here you can see clearly that the enamel never did unite with the metal. Careful cleaning of the metal prior to enameling can prevent this defect; and be sure to avoid touching the clean enamel with your bare fingers.

Overfiring

Properly fired, this enamel would have a rich, opaque gray color. This test sample was intentionally overfired to illustrate what would happen: the



opaque enamel became partially transparent, especially at the edges where the metal was hottest.

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BOX 245

ceram-activities

people, places & things

POOR FISH: This is a story from Chris Purdue (New Haven, Conn.)—a story about a fish who on the one hand served as model for her sculpture and on the other hand was served as piece de resistance for dinner!

"I wanted to reproduce a blackfish in clay expressing, primarily, the rhythm or movement that characterizes the species. The graceful quality of a fish in its natural element is hard to capture so I went to the fish market which has an aquarium. There I studied a live blackfish until I had determined the most effective pose for representing movement. With the right pose firmly fixed in mind, I bought the fish. Imagine my horror when the fishmonger, not knowing my purpose, threw the fish on the floor and stamped on it with his heel to kill it! I almost fell in the tank, but instead retrieved my model and hurried home. I arranged the carcass in the form wanted, and refrigerated it so it would hold the pose.

"The sculpture was made from two slabs of terracotta-colored, grog clay, cut in identical shapes, one to form either side of the fish. The pieces were oversize to provide enough material for back fin and tail. This was to be a hollow fish for the sake of greater rhythm and safer firing.

"The side slabs were hand worked into concave form and set together, the top of one side a little below the other to allow for the back fin. The tail was recessed similarly. All seams were tooled for secure closure; gills were attached separately. When the clay was dry, mounting holes for metal rod supports were drilled, taking into account the slope



intended for the final mounted posture. After firing, the rods were inserted and the form mounted on a wood block, the entire support painted black to contrast with the red clay.

"When last year's annual New England show at Silvermine Guild (Norwalk, Connecticut) came up, I decided to enter a sculptured nude that friends had liked. But since two pieces could be submitted for one fee, I also took the fish along. When I went back, really expecting rejects, I was informed I had received an award. Well, the nude was pretty worthy, I thought, and I'm glad the judges agreed. But lo, there was Blackfish, mounted in all his natural grace, a prize-winner! (I think he winked at me.)

"My husband always says that art is best when it is practical. The terracotta sculpture satisfied him completely for the poor fish which had served as model also came to dinner. M-m-m-m- good!"

JOLLY PAIR: But details were not sent with the photo so if you want to know what's up, ask CM's Q & A man, Ken Smith, for he's the man on the left. The fellow with his hand in the cookie jar (?) is Justin Brady. The occasion, we do know, is a recent meeting of



the Chicago Potters Guild where Brady gave a demonstration of throwing on the wheel; and both men (they represent AMACO) analyzed the fine points of pots thrown by leading ceramists.

MEET OUR AUTHORS: As a boy, Rex Eidson was known as "the mud man" because he liked to hunt for local deposits of

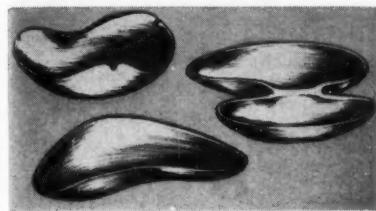
clay, but it wasn't until his wife started taking lessons in ceramics early in the 40's that he became a real fan. His specialty is costume jewelry (see page 17) which he says "practically sells itself." Because of a heart condition he has been ordered out of his pint-sized studio, temporarily at least. But he's not giving up, says that any day now his wife and he may find themselves with evening classes: "we have had so many applicants eager to learn how to construct ceramic jewelry." The Eidsons, with their teen-aged daughter, live at Portland, Ore. P.S. There's another mud man in the family picture—Rex's 76-year-old father who has recently gone all out for ceramics, built his own kiln, ball mill and potter's wheel.

CALLING ALL HOBBYISTS: Contests for hobbyists, sponsored by various suppliers' organizations, are underway. If you are an amateur, you may be one of many winning prizes. Ceramic Leagues, Inc., has already announced a hobby competition at the East-

ern Ceramic Hobby Show at Asbury Park, May 4-8. The piece winning first prize is to be displayed in the Ceramic Museum at Rutgers University, according to the Leagues' president, Ernest Anthony. Exhibit forms, he adds, may be obtained from Contest Chairman, Mabel Morris, 1736 River Rd., Belmar, N. J.

CONTEST FOR CHILDREN: A special decorating contest of national scope, limited to children, has just been announced by Ceramic Colors, Inc., national distributors for Tru-Fyre Laboratories.

Called the First National Ceramic Design Contest for Children, it is restricted to youngsters up to and including 12 years of



age, and is sponsored by Ceramic Colors, Tru-Fyre, and Marc Bellaire, a well-known ceramic artist and designer of California.

In order to put all contestants on an equal basis, specific cast shapes (see cut) are to be decorated. These will be made available by ceramic supply shops carrying Tru-Fyre products. Entry blanks and full details can be obtained from your local supplier or by writing directly to Ceramic Colors, Inc., 6510 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles 38.

Trophies as well as cash awards of \$100, \$50, and \$25 each will be given to the three top pieces; judging and prizes to be held in conjunction with the Eastern Ceramic Hobby Show at Asbury Park, N. J., May 4-8.

TEXAS SUPPLIERS: Leading off with a round of promotional activities, the Southwest Ceramic Association is well into a busy 1955, according to Ruth Campbell of Dallas. The supplier organization took part in the big Dallas Do It Yourself Show last month, giving demonstrations of the craft against a background exhibit of ware. Next on the agenda: "our own ceramic hobby show to be held April 20-24." The SCA's newly elected governing body includes Edna Norris, president; Laura Farr, 1st vice-president.

BUSINESS AS USUAL: Flame, a symbol of ceramics, decorates the letterhead of the Mercedes Ceramic Studios at Toronto, Canada. The symbol became somewhat more than appropriate last December when fire gutted the studio along with five other business concerns. But with most supplies already replaced, the firm is doing business as usual, Dudley Button reports, from temporary quarters next door to the old address.

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STUDIOS NOTE: New directory listings to begin with the April issue accepted up to 15th of March.

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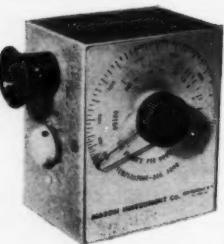
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Overglaze: Ground Laying

(Begins on Page 35)

brush for ground laying over large areas but it must be handled with a very light touch. Any color left over must not be replaced in the original vial if it contains lint from the cotton.

The cleaning of edges around the pattern of the design must be done carefully. Do not use turpentine for this, for it will run into the ground-laid area. Much of the color that has gone out of range of the intended space may be scratched off with a sharp tool, but the final cleaning must be done with water or saliva, using a small stiff brush or cotton on a toothpick. If a stronger vehicle is needed, use denatured alcohol, but even then be careful that it does not run into the painting. Any loose powder left on the china—even one granule which might not be noticeable before firing—will melt, and make an unsightly dot. A perfect clean-up job, therefore, is important. It will be easiest to retain precise sharp lines by first outlining with India ink.

There is a selection of unfluxed mineral colors called *Matt* which lend themselves beautifully to dry dusting. These fire a dull velvety finish in comparison to the regular, fluxed, mineral colors which have a strong glaze finish when dusted on. The mat colors are often used in semi-conventional patterns with luster backgrounds. Banding Blue and Wedgewood are good colors for ground laying, in either mat form or the fluxed mineral. White daisies scratched out of the blue make an effective decoration. Albert yellow or pompadour bands are good combinations with violets and pansies. An area of black with scrolls scratched out before firing, then filled in with metal, makes a good background for poppies. If metal is to be applied on top of fired color, remember the metal must be unfluxed. Metals over mat colors produce bronze tones, not as bright as over the fluxed colors. Filigree work done with a pen over ground-laid colors is very good for ornate patterns on chop plates, cake plates, jewel boxes, candy dishes, etc. Raised paste for gold and enamels are used in conjunction with ground laying for the very decorative china objects. The finest effects are obtained by knowing the appropriateness of the ground laying technique. •

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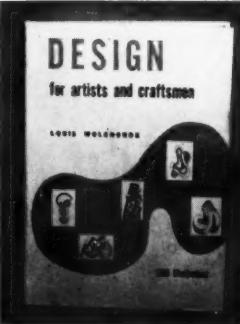
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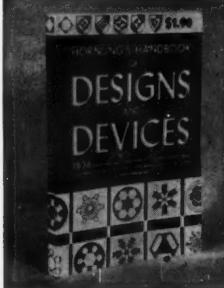
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